

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A rule processing computer-based method comprising:
  - defining a target group of patients chosen from a group of existing patients;
  - defining an action to be taken concerning one or more patients within the target group of patients; and
  - scheduling an execution time for the action.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein defining a target group of patients includes processing the medical records of the existing patients to determine which of the medical records define the existence of a selected condition.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the selected condition concerns a medical condition of a patient.
4. The method of claim 2 wherein the selected condition concerns a physical criteria of a patient.
5. The method of claim 2 wherein the selected condition concerns a habit of a patient.
6. The method of claim 2 wherein the selected condition concerns an activity of a patient.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein defining an action includes one or more of:
  - posting a HTML link for a patient;
  - posting a message for a patient;
  - providing a tool to a patient;
  - transmitting an email to a patient;
  - updating a patient's medical record;
  - transmitting a pop-up message to a patient;

recommending that a patient join a discussion board;  
providing a patient with medical information;  
providing a medical report to a patient;  
providing a medical report to a third party;  
executing a program; and  
notifying a third party.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein scheduling the execution time includes specifying a single, non-recurring, execution time.
9. The method of claim 1 wherein scheduling the execution time includes specifying a plurality of non-recurring execution times.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein scheduling the execution time includes specifying a recurring execution time.
11. The method of claim 1 further comprising executing the action concerning the one or more patients within the target group of patients on or after the execution time.

12. A rule processing computer-based method comprising:
  - determining, for a specific rule, a target group of patients;
  - determining, for a specific rule, an action to be taken concerning one or more patients within the target group of patients;
  - determining, for a specific rule, an execution time for the action; and
  - executing the action concerning the one or more patients within the target group of patients on or after the execution time.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the action includes one or more of:
  - posting a HTML link for a patient;
  - posting a message for a patient;
  - providing a tool to a patient;
  - transmitting an email to a patient;
  - updating a patient's medical record;
  - transmitting a pop-up message to a patient;
  - recommending that a patient join a discussion board;
  - providing a patient with medical information;
  - providing a medical report to a patient;
  - providing a medical report to a third party;
  - executing a program; and
  - notifying a third party.
14. The method of claim 12 wherein the execution time is a single, non-recurring, execution time.
15. The method of claim 12 wherein the execution time is a plurality of non-recurring execution times.
16. The method of claim 12 wherein the execution time is a recurring execution time.

17. The method of claim 12 wherein the target group of patients is defined by processing the medical records of a plurality of existing patients to determine which of the medical records define the existence of a selected condition.

18. A computer program product residing on a computer readable medium having a plurality of instructions stored thereon which, when executed by the processor, cause that processor to:

define a target group of patients chosen from a group of existing patients;

define an action to be taken concerning one or more patients within the target group of patients; and

schedule an execution time for the action.

19. The computer program product of claim 18 wherein the instructions for defining a target group of patients include instructions for processing the medical records of the existing patients to determine which of the medical records define the existence of a selected condition.

20. The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the selected condition concerns a medical condition of a patient.

21. The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the selected condition concerns a physical criteria of a patient.

22. The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the selected condition concerns a habit of a patient.

23. The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the selected condition concerns an activity of a patient.

24. The computer program product of claim 18 wherein the instructions for defining an action include instructions for one or more of:

posting a HTML link for a patient;

posting a message for a patient;

providing a tool to a patient;

transmitting an email to a patient;  
updating a patient's medical record;  
transmitting a pop-up message to a patient;  
recommending that a patient join a discussion board;  
providing a patient with medical information;  
providing a medical report to a patient;  
providing a medical report to a third party;  
executing a program; and  
notifying a third party.

25. The computer program product of claim 18 wherein the instructions for scheduling the execution time include instructions for specifying a single, non-recurring, execution time.

26. The computer program product of claim 18 wherein the instructions for scheduling the execution time include instructions for specifying a plurality of non-recurring execution times.

27. The computer program product of claim 18 wherein the instructions for scheduling the execution time include instructions for specifying a recurring execution time.

28. The computer program product of claim 18 further comprising instructions for executing the action concerning the one or more patients within the target group of patients on or after the execution time.

29. A computer program product residing on a computer readable medium having a plurality of instructions stored thereon which, when executed by the processor, cause that processor to:

determine, for a specific rule, a target group of patients;

determine, for a specific rule, an action to be taken concerning one or more patients within the target group of patients;

determine, for a specific rule, an execution time for the action; and

execute the action concerning the one or more patients within the target group of patients on or after the execution time.

30. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the instructions for executing the action include instructions for one or more of:

posting a HTML link for a patient;

posting a message for a patient;

providing a tool to a patient;

transmitting an email to a patient;

updating a patient's medical record;

transmitting a pop-up message to a patient;

recommending that a patient join a discussion board;

providing a patient with medical information;

providing a medical report to a patient;

providing a medical report to a third party;

executing a program; and

notify a third party.

31. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the execution time is a single, non-recurring, execution time.

32. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the execution time is a

plurality of non-recurring execution times.

33. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the execution time is a recurring execution time.

34. The computer program product of claim 29 further comprising instructions for processing the medical records of a plurality of existing patients to determine which of the medical records define the existence of a selected condition.

35. A rule processing computer-based method comprising:
  - processing a multi-portion medical record for each of a group of existing patients to define a target group of patients chosen from the group of existing patients, wherein each portion of the medical record is assigned a confidentiality level;
  - defining an action to be taken concerning one or more patients within the target group of patients; and
  - scheduling an execution time for the action.